

“DANIEL AND ANGELS”

"I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven.... 'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'" (Daniel 4:13,17 NKJV)

Daniel is a difficult book to understand. It is similar to the book of Revelation. On the Internet, there is a book about Revelation by a Jewish scholar and it has a chapter on Daniel. Like the book of Revelation, in the book of Daniel there are visions about a future time.

For our study of angels, the book of Daniel is a gold mine. There are more names and titles for angels than in any other book. They are described as watchers, messengers, holy ones, men, the army of heaven, princes, chief princes, and kings.

Angels are shown in more roles or activities in Daniel than in any other book of the Bible. Today we will focus on angels carrying messages from God to unbelievers, angels defending or encouraging believers, and both God's angels and Satan's angels being responsible for whole nations.

In Jeremiah's prophecy, God tells the people of Judea that He is sending them into captivity in Babylon for seventy years to allow the land to rest because they had not observed seventy Sabbath years. The Jewish scholar to whom I referred said that, not only the Jews, but the Babylonians, knew of this prophecy that the captivity would only last seventy years. He said that King Belshazzar brought out the holy vessels of the Temple in Jerusalem to serve drinks and celebrate that the Jews were still in captivity after seventy years. He miscalculated. That night Babylon fell to the invading Medes' and Persians' armies.

1.) God sent messages to unbelieving kings by His angels.

Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream." (Daniel 2:1-3 NKJV)

The king demanded that they not only tell him the meaning of the dream but the dream itself. None of them could tell him the dream or the meaning of a dream they knew nothing about. When Daniel and his believing friends prayed, God revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel. This establishes a principle vital to Biblical understanding. No one can understand God's revelation, God's Word, unless the Holy Spirit abides within them making words become God's Word.

"Beltshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation. "These were the visions of my head while on my bed: "I was looking, and behold, A tree in the midst of the earth, And its height was great..." "I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. He cried aloud and said thus: 'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,..." (Daniel 4:9-10,13-14a NKJV)

God sends His message to King Nebuchadnezzar in a dream by an angel called a watcher, a holy one. He still could not understand God's message without Daniel in whom was the Spirit of the Holy God.

Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which had been in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. (Daniel 5:1-5 NKJV)

No one could read the writing on the wall until Daniel was called. He read MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN and explained its meaning.

2.) Angels protect and encourage believers.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. "If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. (Daniel 3:16-17 NKJV)

These three Hebrew men were friends of Daniel and like him were in the king's service. They refused to worship the large golden statue set up by the king. The king ordered them thrown into a fiery furnace. The three soldiers who threw them into the furnace were killed by the heat, but the king saw the three Hebrew men and an angel with them. "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." (Daniel 3:25 NKJV)

Later Daniel was caught up in an order not to pray to anyone but the king for thirty days. When he was seen praying to God as he usually did, the king had no choice but to throw him into the lions' pit. The king did not sleep and early in the morning hurried to see if Daniel was still alive.

Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you." (Daniel 6:21-22 NKJV)

The Jews in Captivity in Babylon were discouraged.

Will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be favorable no more? Has His mercy ceased forever? Has His promise failed forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah (Psalms 77:7-9 NKJV)

In Daniel 9 there is one of the finest prayers in the Bible. Daniel confesses the sins of his people then asks for God's mercy and help.

yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: (Daniel 9:21-23 NKJV)

As soon as Daniel began to pray God sent Gabriel to answer him!

3.) There are angels, good and evil, responsible for whole nations. Gabriel is the angel for the kingdom of God's people. The Jews in Babylon were mainly interested in knowing When are we going home and what will it be like? Some of Daniel addresses this question.

The first prophecy in Daniel concerning nations is the vision King Nebuchadnezzar had of a giant statue with a gold head, its chest and arms silver, its belly and thighs were bronze, its legs were iron and its feet were iron mixed with clay. It represented kingdoms to come, all of which would affect the future of the nation of God's people.

Then Daniel had a vision of four beasts with horns - cruel, wicked, and proud and they ruled and fought over the earth.

"I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened. I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:9-14 NKJV)

In Daniel 8 he tells of a vision he had of a ram and a goat. They represent nations and rulers. They are being guided by evil angels. One of them so exalts himself that he thinks he can take the place of the archangel Michael. They succeed in halting the daily sacrifice in the Temple and of tearing it down. This is a prophecy of the end time. In further chapters the Prince of Greece and Prince of Persia, angels of Satan, oppose Gabriel and fight him until the archangel Michael comes